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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 000154

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/02/2019

TAGS: PTER PGOV ASEC GR

SUBJECT: GREECE: NEW TERRORIST ATTACK ON POLICE

REF: ATHENS 54

Classified By: DCM Deborah McCarthy for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (U) At about 0400 local time on February 3, at least three unidentified people reportedly threw a hand grenade and fired more than nineteen rounds from a 9 mm sub-machine gun at the police station in Korydallos, a western suburb of Athens. The grenade -- reportedly manufactured in "an East European country or Russia" -- did not go off, and no one was injured in the attack. Initial investigation suggested the shooters were targeting a Special Guard sentry and the station's sergeant. Soon after the attack, a caller to a newspaper claimed that the domestic terrorist group Revolutionary Struggle (RS) was behind the attack, but many commentators discounted this claim, noting it was inconsistent with the group's usual practice of claiming responsibility in written statements a number of days after attacks. Police were reportedly investigating the possibility that the same gun and type of grenade had been used in previous attacks.

¶2. (C) Comment: While the alleged RS telephone call claiming responsibility is questionable, it is probable that RS is behind this attack. If so, it would be the third such attack on police by RS since December 23, and it would be consistent with the group's January 15 declaration championing "armed struggle" against police and the entire Greek political system (reftel). RS may have concluded that killing a police officer -- something it almost did in a January 5 attack and easily could have done in this latest incident -- would serve the group's purposes by ratcheting up the social pressure that led to rioting following the death of a 15-year-old student at the hands of police December 6. End Comment.

SPECKHARD